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ABSTRACT

The Office of Research and Evaluation of the Austin (Texas) Independent School District (AISD) has been monitoring the dropout situation in the AISD since 1983-84. In July 1986, a computerized database, the Secondary Student Longitudinal File, was constructed to enable tracking of the enrollment of any group of students beginning with the 1983-84 school year for high school students and the 1985-86 school year for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Dropout rates are also calculated by ethnicity. This fact sheet provides selected statistical data on trends in dropout rates in the AISD between the 1983-84 and 1988-89 school years. The total dropout rate in 1988-89 in grades 7 and 8 (4.2%) was the lowest it has been since monitoring was initiated. The dropout percentage in 1988-89 for grade 9 was lower than in the preceding year. Longitudinal dropout rates are given for the senior high school 1983-84 cohort and the junior high school 1985-86 cohort. By 1989, 29.8% of students who began secondary school in 1983 had dropped out of school. In the same year, 17.2% of those who had started in 1985 had dropped out of school. Three tables and four graphs provide statistical data. (SLD)

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DROPOUT RATES: WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?

Austin Independent School District
FEEDBACK Pub. No. 89.18

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FEEDBACK

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Department of Management Information
Office of Research and Evaluation
458-1227

Dropout Rates: Where are they headed?

The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) has been monitoring AISD's dropout situation and publishing an annual report since 1983-84. During that time, the methods, time frames, cohort definitions, or some combination of these factors has changed annually as we have learned more about the complexities of counting dropouts.

In July, 1986, a longitudinal computerized database, the Secondary Student Longitudinal File (SSLF) was constructed that enables us to track the enrollment status of any group of students at any point in time, beginning with the 1983-84 school year for high school students, and the 1985-86 school year for seventh and eighth grade students.

The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) is the mandated statewide data collection system that was first implemented last school year. In order to come into alignment with PEIMS, all past dropout rates were recalculated for the *1988-89 Dropout Report* .

The 1989-90 documentation deadline is October 1: What you do now can make a difference in the 1989-90 dropout rates reported.

ORE calculates secondary (grades 7-8 and 9-12) school-year, annual, and longitudinal dropout rates. Definitions and actual statistics follow. These rates are calculated overall as well as disaggregated by ethnic group, grade, and gender. The dropout rate that is probably the most sought after is the longitudinal one, because it follows a specific cohort of students and tracks them individually.

The *school-year* dropout rate is the rate for students who drop out during the nine month school year from September to June.

The *annual* rate is the rate for those students who drop out during the entire twelve month period from September to September and includes the summer dropouts but excludes those school-year dropouts who transferred, graduated, or returned to school at the end of the summer.

The *longitudinal* rate is the rate of students who drop out over their high school career. It is calculated by tracking the students individually from the time they first enter ninth (or seventh) grade over a period of years.

Below are AISD school-year dropout rates by ethnicity, as of July of the following summer.

HIGH SCHOOL

Ethnic Group	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
American Indian	31.1%	26.6%	28.8%	25.5%	23.3%	28.3%
Asian	5.7%	6.4%	5.5%	7.7%	8.3%	4.9%
Black	10.6%	10.7%	9.9%	10.9%	10.1%	10.2%
Hispanic	14.0%	15.9%	15.1%	13.7%	15.4%	14.8%
White	7.8%	9.4%	9.1%	9.0%	10.2%	7.6%
TOTAL	9.7%	11.1%	10.7%	10.6%	11.6%	10.2%

The school-year dropout rate last year (10.2%) was the lowest since 1983-84. The rates for Asians (4.9%) and Whites (7.6%) were the lowest in six years.

MIDDLE / JUNIOR HIGH

Ethnic Group	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
American Indian	11.1%	12.0%	6.3%	8.3%	6.9%
Asian	4.7%	5.6%	2.1%	4.0%	2.7%
Black	2.9%	2.6%	5.0%	4.9%	3.8%
Hispanic	6.3%	6.5%	9.2%	9.4%	6.1%
White	[illegible]%	4.5%	6.0%	5.1%	3.0%
TOTAL	[illegible]%	4.7%	6.7%	6.5%	4.2%

The total 7th-8th grade school-year dropout rate (4.2%) was the lowest in ORE's history of tracking 7th and 8th graders. Hispanics and Whites had the lowest dropout rate since ORE has been calculating it, and of all five ethnic groups, American Indians have had the greatest decline.

URBAN EIGHT

The Texas Education Agency's official dropout statistics are based upon the October, 1989 Survey, grades 7-12.

DISTRICT	DROPOUT RATE	CHANGE FROM 1988
Austin	9.60%	-.98
Corpus Christi	4.82%	-.59
Dallas	16.36%	+.52
El Paso	5.25%	-.69
Fort Worth	7.30%	-3.08
Houston	11.95%	-5.69
San Antonio	11.89%	-.25
Ysleta	6.78%	+.01

Documentation of dropouts and transfer students across the districts still appears to be inconsistent. Austin falls in the middle of the Urban Eight in terms of rate and change. *(Editorial Note: ORE does not agree with the method TEA used to calculate these rates, but these are the official state statistics.)*

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1988-89 DROPOUT FEEDBACK

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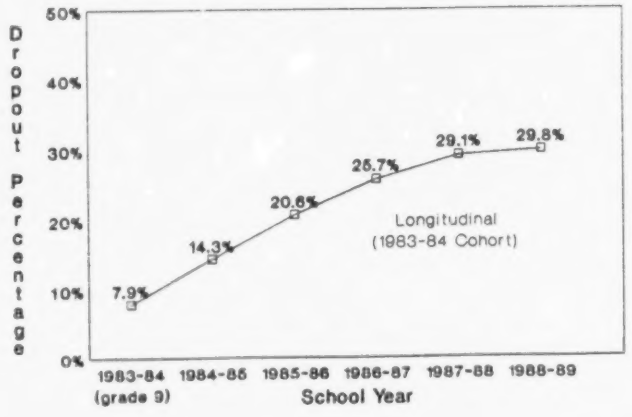
Longitudinal, Annual, and School-Year Dropout Rates

Grades 9-12

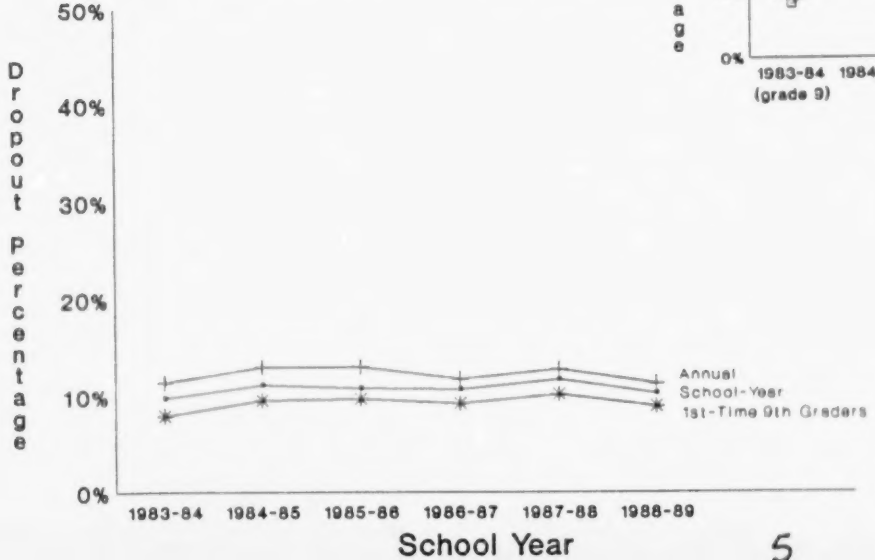
The *annual* rate is as of October of the following year for the past six school years.

The *school-year* rate is as of July. Although the numbers available in July are necessarily incomplete, and inadequate, they are used here to give a sense of the trend across time.

Also included is a dropout rate as of July for *first-time ninth graders* each year, beginning with the 1983-84 school year.



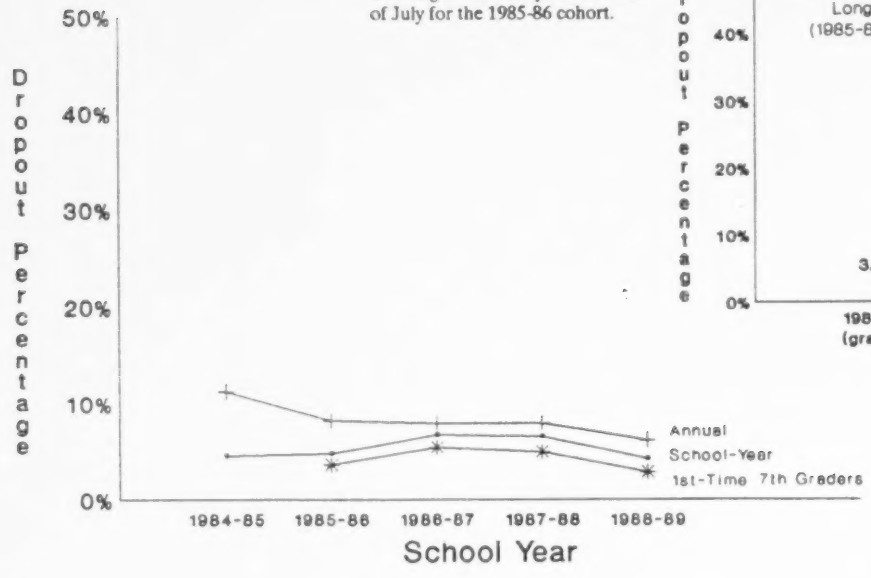
The *longitudinal* dropout rate is as of July for the 1983-84 cohort of first-time ninth graders.

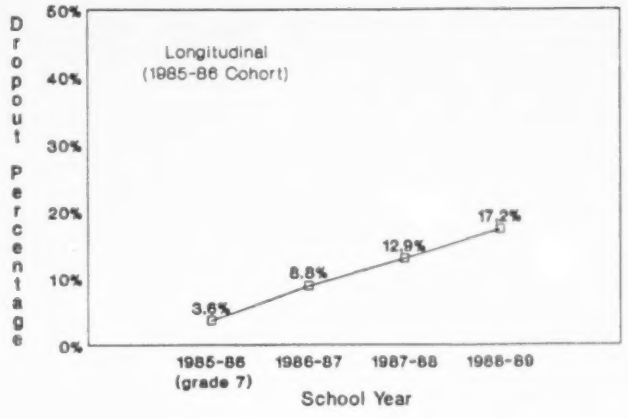


For additional information see the *1988-89 Dropout Report* (ORE Pub. No. 89.12).

Grades 7-8

The *longitudinal* dropout rate is as of July for the 1985-86 cohort.





ORE began calculating 7th- and 8th-grade dropout rates in 1984-85. Junior high schools were added to the longitudinal data collection system in the 1985-86 school year.

The *annual* rate is as of October of the following year.

The school-year rate is as of July of the following summer.

The *first-time seventh graders'* rate is as of July, beginning with the 1985-86 school year.

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